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NARRATIVE

OF THE

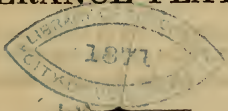
MYSTERIOUS CAN,

ILLUSTRATIVE

OF THE WASHINGTONIAN REFORM.

TO WHICH IS APPENDED THE

TEMPERANCE PLATFORM.



By J. W. DUTCHER.

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PREFACE.

In arranging these pages for the press, it has not been so much the writer's object to win applause, as to engage attention. Many there are, who have no disposition to listen to the thrilling appeals of lecturers — or to investigate the sad realities presented in carefully compiled statistics, or even to allow a just appreciation of their own experience in regard to the evils of intemperance, who may, nevertheless, be induced to read the NARRATIVE OF THE MYSTERIOUS CAN, if for no other reason than that of the manner in which the subject is presented. It is but just, however, here to acknowlelge that for the main plot of the Tale, I am indebted to an *unknown* author, whose story was told many years ago; in the perusal of which I was very much, though painfully, entertained.

And upon which, some enlargements—perhaps, improvements—have been made;—a diversity of illustrations interspersed, and many interesting additional incidents introduced.

Notwithstanding that phase of the Temperance Enterprise designated as the Washingtonian Reform, has in a degree passed,—still the *spirit* of that movement should not be permitted to slumber so long as one individual remains in bondage to the fell despoiler of domestic comfort, human happiness, and the eternal interests of the soul.—Nor will it sleep!—The Fiat of Eternal Love and Justice will inspire the friends of Virtue and the advocates of Truth and Mercy, to persevere in their glorious struggle, until the last poor drunkard is reclaimed; and until, so far at least as the murderous traffic in Alcohol is concerned, it shall no longer be said, that

> ——————"Man's inhumanity to man,
> Makes countless thousands mourn."

In obedience to the mandate of that Decree, the Temperance Enterprise is now on its transit into another, and it is confidently anticipated, its final phase,—and the Great Cold Water Army is now everywhere organizing, and preparing to enter the closing battle field. Some of the prominent causes inducing this necessary change in the mode of operations, may be observed in various portions of the

Narrative, and of the supplemental *tete-a-tete* connected with it; but which are more concisely summed up in the Preamble and Resolutions constituting the TEMPERANCE PLATFORM, to which our present, and all future efforts, should with strict fidelity conform.

It will not, I trust, be deemed altogether superfluous to state, that this Narrative was written several years since, (in 1847 or '48,) and under circumstances, utterly precluding the idea of its ever being presented to the public eye. And also to say, that the Platform, written some time anterior to the promulgation of the justly far-famed Maine Anti-Liquor Law, was not originally intended for publication:—but, through the earnest solicitation of friends, they are now, in this convenient form, presented together.

That it may in some degree subserve the interest of the cause of Temperance, and add its mite in staying the streams of pollution, fraught with disease and desolation wherever they flow, this little *missile*, with all its faults and imperfections, is humbly submitted to the ordeal of the cruel critic, and the attentive perusal of the philanthropic reader, by the

AUTHOR.

May, 1854.

THE MYSTERIOUS CAN.

Day after day there passed my door
A poor and slender pale faced lad,
Some ten years old perhaps, or more,
Whose countenance was grave and sad.
It mattered not how hot or cold,
Or fair or foul, or wet or dry,
As surely as the hours were told,
This little boy I saw pass by.
But who he was, or what his name,
I had not even tried to learn,—
I only knew, each morn that came
He'd pass up street, and soon return;
And that, unlike most of his age,
He never stopped to talk and play,
But eager as a faithful page,
Pressed forward on his weary way.

But what excited me still more
Than did his constant round of toil,
I noticed that he always bore
A little can! designed for oil.

While it was summer, and the air
Was warm or moderately mild,
I saw him pass with little care,
And sometimes e'en repulsive smiled,
To see the anxious fellow stride
Along, intent upon his way,
As though his quest might be denied,
Or he from home too long should stay.
Indeed, his brow and visage all,
Deep semblance bore to man of care,
Although he was in stature small,
With dress like that which beggars wear.

But Time's swift wheels cease not their troll,
The Summer Sun must close its reign;
Dark storm-clouds o'er th' horison roll,
Cold Autumn winds sweep hill and plain;
And many of our feeble race,
The virtuous and the vicious poor,
With bleeding hearts, or brazen face,
Are seeking alms from door to door.
Yet he, the hero of my song,
Makes no petition, no lament,
But with his CAN he hastes along,
Upon his mission all intent.

'T was bleak November, forty-two,
The day, I still remember well
From thrilling scenes that met my view,
Which, ere it close, this tale shall tell.
Fierce winds and cold, with rain and snow
Impeded quite the traveler's way,
And none but those compelled to go
Would venture out on such a day.—
And as the clock was striking ten,
The streets with snow becoming gray,
I queried with my working men,
"Think you we'll see *that boy to-day?*"
And ere the sound had died away,
Or ceased to vibrate on my ear,
My eye unbidden went astray,
Amid the storm that raged so drear.
The lengthened streets, each busy mart,
Where men in crowds are often seen,
Jostled about by coach and cart
With barely room to pass between,
Were all deserted, save by few
Whom need or urgent duty drove,
Were now presented to my view,
Or in the streets were seen to move;
And they, or most of them, so well
Enveloped in their winter dress
Of cloaks and furs, they scarce could tell
How cold the storm and pitiless.—
While gazing thus, with half-closed eye,
To screen it from the pelting storm,
At distance far I chanced to spy,
Though indistinct, a tiny form;

Which seemed to be a little child
With truant heart in sportive glee,
Daring the tempest raging wild,
To show how brave a boy could be!

Some business called me up the street,
Which occupied me half an hour;
And while returning through the sleet,
I felt the storm in all its power.
Indeed the rain, and snow, and hail,
Seemed striving for the mastery;
And yet the wind in wildest wail
Proclaimed distinct, supremacy!
And as it fiercely whistled by,
Or roared upon the mountain side,
The sleet was wafted through the sky
Like clouds of spray from uptossed tide.
The view was solemn, grand, sublime,
Inspiring thoughts of sad distress,
Defying skill and power of rhyme,
Or language fully to express!

I thought of those stout, hardy men,
Tossed to and fro on ocean-wave,
Whose barks might be, as oft they've been,
Dashed on the rocks where tempests rave;
Or on some savage, Arab shore,
Where men, more reckless than the gale,
Delight to brute their hands in gore,
And joy to see their victims quail.—
I thought of those whose toil and care
With pittance small is oft repaid,

Compelled with shame and dread to share
The bitter draught Oppression made.—
I thought of those whom want and woe,
And fell disease, and torturing pain,
Had crushed to earth, or, bending low,
Too sad to weep or to complain.
—Yes, oft the sympathetic soul
Is burdened by the grief of those
O'er whom the clouds of sorrow roll,
Yet bear in silence all their woes:
The brave and virtuous poor, with pride
Forbid the tongue to utter grief,
And almost spurn, or meekly chide
The proffered hand of kind relief!

I thought of those, whose hearts are wed
To vice, and live by fraud and theft,
Who're amply clothed and fully fed,
Because, forsooth, of shame bereft;
Who boast of their ill-gotten gains,
Obtained by alms deceptive sought,
And of their bland and plausive strains,
Of schemes, so shrewd and finely wrought;
Who plead with eloquence so meek,
In accents soft, so faint and low,
You scarce can hear them when they speak,
While they their wounds and bruises show!
—Others again, who, all forlorn,
Of fortune wronged, or buildings burned,
Fond children from their bosoms torn,
And they, alas, from dwellings turned!
—Such, and the like, are common pleas

The *vicious* poor invent, to gain
A livelihood of shame and ease,
And papers, sealed, their plaints sustain!
—Ah, better bear the ills of life,
Submissive bow to grief and pain,
Than wealth to hoard by fraud and strife,
Or lose our souls the world to gain.

I thought too, of another grade
Of suffering poor, yes, poor indeed,
Compared with those by aught else made,
For whom my tongue shall ever plead:
That class I mean, which circumstance,
Or foolish fashion has controlled;
Through habit, appetite, or chance,
O'er whom Intemperance has rolled.
Of all the poverty on earth,
None rivals that the poison bowl
Has madly wrought, or given birth—
None so degrades, or blights the soul!
This dread Despoiler oft has swayed
Its withering wand o'er promise bright,
And soon, in sable garb arrayed
The mind so late all love and light.—
No ray of joy shines bright and free
Upon their pathway bleak and bare;
And though they may not beggars be,
Yet worse than beggars' woes they share:
For e'en the torch of Reason fails
To cheer the sadness of their gloom,
And naught but darkness deep prevails,
To shroud their passage to the tomb.—

Far better sink beneath the wave,
And sleep in Ocean's coral bed;
Than be a base besotted slave,
Or through a life of shame be led!

But, I'm digressing quite too far,
My thoughts have led my pen astray;
I did not mean to wage a war
With all the evils of the day.
"The poor," 'tis said, "yé always have,"
And O, how "gracious 'tis to give"
To those who need the boon they crave—
"More precious far, than to receive."
Then turn no beggar from your door,
However feeble be his prayer:
The vilest of the vagrant poor,
May yet enjoy God's special care.

But now, behold! that little boy
Whom I supposed engaged in play,
Has been in earnest, sad employ,
Stemming the torrent, on his way.
As if regardless of the gale,
He has been struggling all this while,
And buffeting the sleet and hail
To gain, perhaps, a half a mile!—
And when he had approached so near
That I could scan his person plain,
His form and dress appeared the same,
As did the *can*, he bore again:—
Yet when I say his form and dress
Appeared the same, I should except

The ten-fold grief that marked his face
With signs indubious how he'd wept;
And of his dress, although the same
In texture and in tatters too,
Was now so drenched that from it came,
Almost in streams, the rain and snow.

Intent I watched him trudging by,
Wending his weary way up street,
With trembling limb and downcast eye,
With crownless hat, and shoeless feet.
—'T is very strange indeed, I mused,
That such a little slender child
Should be so recklessly abused,
And doomed to bear this tempest wild:
For now 't was plain that something more
Than merely common childish play,
Induced this lad to pass my door
From week to week, day after day!

He soon retraced his steps again,
And glad was I to see him go,—
But oh! it filled my heart with pain,
To mark his foot-prints in the snow!
—Was it for *oil* this boy was sent
As surely as the morn returned?
For food, or medicine, he went?—
My judgment, each, indignant spurned.
What was it then? my thoughts enquire;
What dooms him to this servile toil?
Is he the son of drunken sire,
Who sends for RUM! instead of *oil?*—

Ah, now we have the secret gained,
One ray of light, one searching thought,
The mystery of that *can* explained,
And in my heart this purpose wrought:—
That on the morrow, should I see
This little fellow on his way,
I would accost him frank and free,
To hear what he, himself would say;
And if from him should learn the fact,
That my convictions were too true,
I would, in right good earnest ACT,
And try some good, at least, to do!—
I then reflected, how I'd seen
Him oft, with half-averted eye,
Or turned the latticed blind, to screen
Myself, as sadly he passed by;
And thought how oft with foolish pride,
(Affianced near to bitter scorn,)
My heart his meager look would chide,
And scoff the rags so long he'd worn.—
But now, resolved, that ne'er again
With haughty frown or taunting jeer,
Would I afflict his heart with pain,
Or dim his eye with bitter tear.
My soul too caught a flame of love,
Approving conscience set its seal;
The Spirit bade me onward move,
Inspiring new and ardent zeal.—
Yes—on the morrow will I try
To soothe and cheer his burdened heart;
And may true Wisdom from on high,
Direction, and its aid impart.

My mind had been absorbed so deep,
I heeded naught that passed around,
Until, at length, a sooty sweep
Aroused me with a thrilling sound,
That startled me as though a shock
Of vasty moment had transpired!
And what's the time? ah, two o'clock!
Can it be so? I soon enquired.
—But, little sweep, you too thought I,
Deserve the pity of mankind;—
Whoever heard your plaintive cry,
Without a cloud pass o'er his mind!
To think how base, and mean and low,
Your calling has your soul consigned;
No cheering smile, or beaming glow,
To 'lume the darkness of your mind;
But, wrapped in sooty uniform,
Beneath your tyrant-master's eye,
From early morn, through cold and storm,
Resound the echoes of your cry!

But, lo! here's something strange indeed,—
Again, I see my little *man!*
Hasting along with utmost speed,
Bearing, of course, his *specious can!*
The thought at once impressed my mind,
Nor could I wish the hope to waive,
That Providence had now designed
The way and means this child to save.
—The storm in part, was lulled to rest,
Although the wind was bleak and cold,
Booming along from north of west,

And flurried snow before it rolled.
Still on he pressed, devoid of care,
His dress all fluttering in the breeze,
Unmindful of his feet quite bare,
And that, protruding were his knees!—
And when he had approached so near
That I could plainly scan his face,
And saw the large unbidden tear
Adown his cheek its fellow chase,
My heart was ready with my hand,
My tongue obedient and mild;
And thus prepared, with purpose grand
I gently hailed the trembling child;—
The words I used have passed from mind,
Therefore I can't repeat them here;
Let it suffice, I meant them kind,
And guaged them solely for *his* ear:
At first I asked his age, and name,
If he was hungry, wet, and cold;
Where he resided—whence he came?
All which he answered meek yet bold.
I then enquired, although I knew,
Whether he had not once before
Been in the town, and with what view;
Had I not seen him pass my door?
To which he sadly made reply,
That "in the morning I did come,"—
But ere he closed, began to cry,
I only heard, "wouldn't, and went home."

Gently I tried to quell his fears,
Speaking in accents calm and mild,

And with my 'kerchief dried his tears,
  Bowed low my head, and faintly smiled;
Entreating him to tell me more
  About his morning's errand here;
And as I'd seen him oft before,
  He need not hesitate or fear.—
Encouraged by my kind caress
  He suffered me to take his hand,
Which felt almost as cold as ice,—
  In fact, the child could scarcely stand.
Yet when I plead with him to go
  Into the house, his feet and hands
To warm—he trembling said, "Ah, No,
  My father gave me strict commands,
To hasten on my errand there
  And soon as possible get home,
Or he would flog my back all bare,
  He was so awful dry for—*some!*"—

And this expose, so true and plain,
  In perfect childlike artlessness,
Revealed the fact I sought to gain—
  The real cause of his distress.
Yet still I did not let him know
  That he had touched the secret spring
Of all his sadness and his woe,
  That gave his soul its deepest sting.
But mildly urged him to explain,
  What errand of importance brought
Him in before, and now again.
  Two tedious miles! and what he sought!
Is it for Oil, my little man,

Molasses, Vinegar, or Wine!
For which you always bring your can?
Pray tell me now of its design;—
Or, is your father very sick,
Decrepit, feeble, lame, or blind,
He thus should charge you to be quick,
And threaten you with stripes unkind?

A moment's space I paused to see
The sudden changes o'er his face,
As from his soul's deep misery
His burning thoughts each other chase.—
At length, a faltering answer came:
"I did not come for oil or wine,
Nor is my father sick or lame,
His health 's as good as yours or mine."
—Still I was foiled—he seemed to dread,
Or was ashamed to speak its name!
Yet, whispering, he faintly said,
"I dare not tell, for *what* I came!"
But I assured him not to fear,
As I would shield him from all harm,
And pressed him to my bosom near,
To give my kindness greater charm;
Then with my soul all in my eye,
With mildest accent on my tongue,
My utmost skill resolved to try,
Till from his lips the truth was wrung.

Oppressed, and moveless, for a space,
As marble cold, he speechless stood;
A dismal gloom o'erspread his face,

And fearful thoughts his heart obtrude.—
But soon, a gleam or flash of light
Seemed radiating from his soul,
Like beam of joy o'er Sorrow's blight,
Or beacon kind where surges roll.
And, much convulsed, in trembling tone,
With eyes concealed, thro' shame or pride,
Beneath the shield around him thrown,
"I came for *Whisky!* Sir," he cried.
And while his tears in gushing streams
Adown his cheeks in torrents ran,
I formed a bow of joyous beams
Upon the cloud for him to scan.
—Soon as the shock had spent its force,
And he composed to understand
The meaning of my purposed course,
I clasped his little bony hand,
And bade him now to weep no more,
To banish fear, and dread, and grief;
Repeating what was said before—
That he should surely find relief.

Yet ere I told him how I thought
To free him from his misery,
Again, by querying, I sought
To learn more of the family:
And did you then, the drink obtain—
Or, why this second trip to-day?
I wish you would the whole explain;
What did the whisky-seller say?
"He said, Sir, that 'he *would not trust!*
And if I wanted anything

He had to sell, to *show the dust*—
He loved to hear the coppers ring!'
So I was then compelled to go,
Without the whisky, all way home,
Through pelting wind and rain and snow—
My clothes all wet, and I quite numb."
Well, have you money now, to pay—
Or, think he'll trust, this afternoon?
What can you urge—what will you say,
To change his sordid mind so soon?
"Ah, Sir, I have no *money*, true,"
The lad sedately made reply,
"But here is *something* that will do,
At least, my father bade me try."

And then, in stealth-like shame, he drew
From underneath his scanty clothes,
A package that had 'scaped my view,
And showed a pair of *woman's shoes!*—
"My sister, now thirteen years old,
Who lives," said he, "with Mister Burr,
And works for wages, I am told,
Did give them to my Mother, Sir."
—But will the whisky-man receive
Such articles as these in trade?
What reason have you to believe
He'll take the gift your sister made?
"He'll take them, Sir, I have no doubt;
For once, I know my father sent
A good, large *book*, that told about
Poor Lazarus,—and where he went;
About the Prophets, Priests, and Kings;

About the cross, the Saviour bore,
His sorrows, tears, and sufferings,
And of the crown of thorns He wore!
And after he had taken it,
For many days he filled my can,
And did not charge a single bit,
Although he is a stingy man!
Yes, Sir, he'll take the shoes, most sure,
For they are new, and good ones too;
Why, he well knows that we are poor,
And that my father naught will do."

I listened to this artless tale,
With deep emotion and distress;
And grieved, that one so young and frail,
Should thus be doomed to wretchedness:
The more, because he seemed to share
So much of Nature's noblest skill;
Upon whose brow, though blanched with care,
Bright lines of genius lingered still.
And when his mind was free from dread,
Allowed to act its wonted part,
His brilliant eye a luster shed,
Expressive of his guileless heart.

But let me ask you now, said I,
Suppose you should the *drug* obtain,
Would it a needed want supply!
Or surely cause regret and pain?
Did whisky ever shed around
Your country home one joyous ray?
Or, have you not most frequent found,

Instead of gladness—dread dismay?
—Sure, you do not, I hope, desire
Your father should such poison drink,
Nor deem he needs the liquid fire!
Whatever he may seem to think.—
"Ah, No!" he said, "I wish that I
Might never see another drop;
And, true or false, I know not why,
Yet father says, *he cannot stop!*—
It often makes him cross and sad,
And frequently he'll curse and swear;
Sometimes it makes him raving mad,
And then we children must take care!
And then, too, if my mother chance
To speak a word he does not like,
He'll wish her off away to France,
And swing his fists as if to strike!
And one time, Sir, not long ago,
He was so strangely mad and wild,
That in his rage he struck a blow,
To kill the poor, sick, little child!—
Ah, Sir, you cannot ever know
One half the trouble and distress,
This little *can* has caused to flow
Around our hearth's dark wilderness!
But still, if one with motives pure,
Would talk to him as kind and plain
As you have, Sir, to me, I'm sure
My father would not drink again."

Till now, I had not fully thought
What course precisely to pursue;

In fact the scheme that I had wrought,
Had only *his* release in view.
But from this hint, of Sorrow's sigh,
That from his lips imploring rose,
I felt the impress of a spirit high,
A still more noble task impose.
Although I felt like one of old,
The want of Aaron's fluent speech,
Yet well remembered what was told
The early Christians: "Go, and teach."
And thus, relying upon Truth,
With Hope's bright Star in view,
I told the poor desponding youth
What I had now resolved to do:—
Come, dry your tears, and let us go,
I'll try the utmost means to save
Your father from this direful woe,
Lest he should fill a drunkard's grave.
"But stay," the half-bewildered child
Exclaimed, "I have not yet been, *there!*
How shall I meet my father's wild
And disappointed, angry stare?"
—Leave that to me, he's sober now,
At least, he has not drank to-day;
And should he pledge his solemn vow
"To cast the poison bowl away,"
He will not frown, nor curse and swear,
But will rejoice that you should save,
And pleased to see your mother wear,
Those nice new shoes your sister gave.

Sometime he paused, in doubt and dread,
Trembling in hope, oppressed with fears;
Till slow he raised his drooping head,
His eyes still swimming in their tears,
And half reprovingly replied:
"Till now, I never disobeyed;
What shall I do should father chide?
Or how, kind Sir, his wrath evade?"
More fully then I told my plan,
And what I hoped the end would be;
And while our tongues incessant ran,
He followed, half-reluctantly.
And as we pressed upon our way,
Beyond the confines of the town,
Though barefoot still, I heard him say,
"The snow is just as soft as down!"
But no complaining of the cold,
For his young heart now seemed to share
A portion of that purpose bold,
Which I alone, felt loth to bear.
—And as we on our journey ran,
And brought their dwelling place in view,
Instinctively, he raised his can,
As when 't was full he used to do!
Then quick, as if impressed with shame,
He tried to screen it 'neath his dress,
And, whispering asked, "Am *I* to blame?
How can I for this fault confess?"

But when we neared the dismal place,
He paused—or rather, shrank aghast,
As o'er his torture-stricken face,

A sense of conscious error passed.
"Kind Sir," said he, with faltering tongue,
"I dare not see my father yet!
He knows how long I have been gone,
And still no drink for him did get;
Let me stay back behind a tree
Till you have time to tell him why
You came out here along with me,
And that I did no whisky buy."

This plan, I thought was well designed,
And would, no doubt, have good effect;
As I could better speak my mind,
And he the less my aim suspect.
But, I remarked, it is so cold,
To stay out here you'll almost freeze.
"O, no," said he, with spirit bold,
"I'll run about among the *trees!*
My clothes are nearly dry, you know,
And as it does no longer storm,
No matter if the wind does blow,—
I'll manage somehow to keep warm."
Determined thus, he quickly flew,
Or bounded, rather, like a deer,
Among the stunted shrubs that grew
Around the drunkard's cottage drear.

Yes, drear indeed, I knew full well,
For sad experience had taught
Me sorely, what I need not tell,
Nor how relief to me was brought:
Let it suffice, then, here to say,

That long *I* bore the galling yoke,
And bowed submissive to its sway,
Till Power Divine, my bondage broke.

Awhile I paused, quite sure that we
In our approach had not been seen,
As on the road-side chanced to be
A hedge of laurel-evergreen;
And which in truth, to me appeared
The only thing I could descry
That was not withered, scathed, or seared,
And rendered painful to the eye!
The house, if house indeed it were,
Bore testimony fully strong,
To lack of prudence and of care,
And signs of want and woe and wrong!
But should I now attempt to write
A full description, plain and true,
It would afford but feeble sight
Of the decay that met my view:
The wasting wand of withering vice
Had spread sad desolation 'round,
On house, (or hovel, more precise,)
On windows, fences, and the ground!
In short, it seemed befitting place,
The hope-forsaken, lonely spot,
Of one, whose sorrows and disgrace
Are all summed up, in—*drunken sot!*
But, having made a brief survey,
Or superficial glance outside,
I thought, within to make my way,
Whate'er my mission might betide:

Raising the latch with cautious hand,
The crazy door swung open slow;
And with what grace I could command,
Entered the dismal haunt of woe.

Till now, my willing task had seemed
As if with pleasure only fraught;
For I had all the while esteemed
The end half gained by hopes inwrought.
But, lo! a scene of sadness deep,
Such as my mind could ne'er conceive:
O'er which, if fallen angels weep,
Or whisky-sellers ever grieve;
Or the dark fiend, for whom they toil,
E'er sheds o'er wretchedness a tear;
They could not from this view recoil,—
For *their own works* would chain them here.

Transfixed I stood, and gazed around
Upon the rubbish in the room;
Deep silence reigned—almost profound,
Which gave to all still deeper gloom;
But language fails me to present
In truthful shades the frightful view;
E'en fancy fails me to invent
Description of the motley crew!
Nor poet's pen has power, I ween,
Nor artist's pencil skill to trace
The sombre aspect of the scene,
The hideous woe that veiled each face!
Yet, though the task may challenge skill
To give the picture life-like hue,

I must essay, if not fulfill
The task a master-hand should do :—

The first poor object that my eye
Within that dim and humid shade,
Though indistinct, I chanced to spy,
Upon my mind sad impress made :
Seated upon a rough-hewn *frame*,
Which served for bedstead, I suppose,
While rags, of every hue and name,
Supplied the place of bed and clothes,
Was he, the constituted head,
The sworn provider for this band,
With vows most solemn, when he led
His youthful partner by the hand ;
And pledged before the heavens above
By constant watchfulness and care,
To comfort, nourish, and to love,
And in her weal and woe to share.

But Oh ! how fallen, how debased !
What direful change had whisky wrought !
That noble brow, where Wisdom traced
Deep lines of purity of thought ;
That cheek, where health and beauty glowed ;
That eye, which burned with lustrous light,
And tongue, with eloquence that flowed,
Are palsied all ! by withering blight.
Devoid of stockings and of shoes,
Without a coat, or vest, or hat,
With matted hair, and beard profuse,
And head bowed down, the drunkard sat.

The wife, and sharer of his shame,
  Sat sighing in a creaking chair;
Her want of dress was much the same,
  And on her face sat deep despair;
For, in addition to her own,
  She felt the bitter pangs and pain
Of one more helpless far, and lone,
  Whose infant tongue could not complain:
Upon her hands it moaning lay,
  Regardless of the woes among,
Or yet how soon life passed away,
  As back and forth it gently swung.

Beside the mother, stood a child,
  Perhaps some seven or eight years old,
Whose slender form and visage wild,
  Most plainly of her tortures told.
In scanty robe and thin, she stood
  And watched with eagerness each sigh
And deep-drawn breath, in saddest mood—
  Oppressed with fear lest it should die!
—And as I stood, quite unobserved,
  Yet able all within to view,
By looking o'er a rug that served
  To check the wind that fiercely blew,—
I heard a voice break through the gloom,
  Resembling what, I need not say,
That startled all within the room:
  "*What keeps—that boy—so long—to day!*"

But soon my eye from him was turned
  Towards the anxious guardian child,

By whose kind efforts, soon I learned
Her little heart was undefiled:
With tongs she long the embers raked,
Until her valued prize she found,
A small *potato*, now well baked,
Which she had dug from frozen ground!
And having brushed the ashes clear,
She meekly to her mother said,
"Mother, give this to Willy, dear,
And let me hold his little head;
He must be hungry,—*so am I*,
But little Willy is so sick,
If he don't eat he'll surely die!
O, Mother, let him eat it quick!"
But while she thus by acts of love,
Unveiled the kindness of her soul,
To soothe her grief the mother strove—
Yet watched the while, the death-cloud roll.
—A few brief moments more passed by;
The mother's lingering hope had fled!
And suddenly I heard her cry
In saddest woe—"*My babe is dead!*"

Till now, the bruted father seemed
Unconscious of all things around,
Except, per chance, he may have dreamed
Of fancied joys in whisky found.
But when he heard his wife express,
In thrilling cry her misery,
It pierced his soul's deep, dark recess,
And roused him from his lethargy!
"What's that, you say—Is Willy dead?

Can it be so—and is he gone?"
"Ah! Yes, 'tis so," the daughter said,
"And where, Oh, where is brother John?"

And then, amid the stirring grief,
That well might move each throbbing heart,
I ventured forth, to lend relief,
And in their anguish take a part.
At first, they seemed somewhat amazed,
To see a stranger thus intrude;
And each upon the others gazed,
As though they deemed my presence rude.
But I assured them that I came,
On hearing of their sad distress,
(Although I knew them but by name,)
To cheer them in their loneliness!—
And now, said I, as death has flung
His fatal arrow near your heart,
And has your darling infant stung,
I trust you'll freely yield the part
I wish to act. Believe me, Sir,
And you, sad Mother, when I say,
That I have walked this distance far,
To lend my aid your griefs to stay.
—Suppress your sorrows and your sighs,
For this young plant so frail and fair
Is but transferred to milder skies
To bud anew and blossom there!

I then proposed myself to go,
As still the wind was roaring wild,
To let some of the neighbors know,

That they might come and dress the child!
And as this mission was disclosed,
I made it my especial care
To hint, that if they felt disposed,
Some *linen* might be needed there.—
And on returning, sought the way
That led me to the boy's retreat;
Where I encouraged him to stay,
Till I the signal should repeat!
—And having thus the way prepared,
Through means so varied from my plan,
I felt that Providence still shared
In all the interests of man.
—And on re-entering again
The place of death, and darkness deep,
I spent a moment to explain,
Then took a seat to gaze and weep.

Awhile I sat, and mused profound
Amid the deep and silent gloom:
No love-light ray—no hope-fraught sound,
Swept o'er the mournful mental tomb!
But all around me seemed to share
The like dread aspect of decay,
As th'uncouth bedstead—creaking chair,
And filthy rags in wild array!
—And if my soul was moved to pity,
Or if its sympathies were raised,
By him who daily strolled the city,
I *now*, was tortured and amazed!
They seemed so sunken, low, and lost
To sense of worth, or dread of shame;

So long had been thus tempest-tost,
No earthly power could e'er reclaim.

He was a drunkard! well I knew;
And knowing, gave me hope to urge
With yearning soul, this hapless crew
To shun the breakers and the surge.
But still I had not even dared
To intimate the grand design
That all my heart's best wishes shared,
Nor they, my object could divine.
Yet with convergent argument,
By kindness warm, and purpose pure,
I gave my pent up anguish vent,
Their better friendship to secure.
—But soon the neighboring women came,
Supplied with various needed things,
Which here, of course, I need not name,—
They knew their wants, and sufferings.

Then, bowing to the man, I said,
Sir, if you please, we'll take a walk
While these kind ladies robe the dead,
That with more freedom we may talk.
With something like becoming grace
He yieded to this plain request.—
Of course I sought *convenient place*,
Ere I would probe his swollen breast.
—And, though I ne'er had seen before
The eye that now returned my gaze,
I knew the latent spark it bore
If gently fanned would brightly blaze!

E'en though all else was crushed, subdued,
My faith on this *lone star*, relied;
Deep though he were with shame imbued,
This truthful index, hope supplied.

My friend, said I, although your heart
Is pierced with sorrows's sharp and keen,
Yet glad am I to share a part
In this afflictive, painful scene!
Not, that I joy in your distress,
Or in your plenitude of woe;
Nay, rather far would I repress
The cruel cause from which they flow!
—Persuaded, Sir, from what I've seen,
And observation made with care,
I judge that in past years you've been
In other sphere than now you are!
And Sir, permit me here to say,
That though the heart be lost to worth,
And mind and feeling all decay,
Yet "sorrow springs not from the earth."
The talent given, must be improved,
Despite the cost, whate'er it takes;
By virtue prized, or vice beloved,
Man makes himself—or he unmakes!

And now, dear Sir, as this appears
Befitting season to review
The varied scenes of by-gone years,
The lights and shadows we've past through,
I should be pleased to hear you tell
Some leading features of your life;

Of joys that rose, and griefs that fell,
And how you've met the world of strife!
For I have never known the man,
That trod the earth our length of years,
But by a retrospect, could scan
Bright spots of joy, dark vales of tears.
—And had I time Sir, now to trace
A portion of *my* history through,
You would not deem your painful case
The worth of pondering or review!
Ah, Sir, I've worn the massive chain,
And felt its blighting, withering spell;
Beneath its weight, have suffered pain
Beyond the power of tongue to tell!—
Yes, Sir, although I blush to own
I was a drunkard—yet 'tis true!
But now, behold, I here alone
Unveil my heart, and hope, to you.
—I would not wound your noble heart,
Nor charge you with demeanor base;
But kindly act the Christian's part
In your desponding, suffering case.
Indeed, the moment that I learned
Your destitution and distress,
My anxious breast like brother's burned
To win you from this wretchedness.
And O, my friend, what joy would spring
From *her* lone heart, now steeped in woe,
Transfixed with Sorrow's sharpest sting,
And o'er whose soul dark waters flow!
And think, what gladsome smiles would beam,
How bright their tearless eyes would shine,

And what would be your children's theme,
If you, the sacred PLEDGE should sign!

Till now, in almost listless mood,
With rigid brow and sullen eye,
Like soulless thing, he moveless stood,
With scarce a murmur or a sigh.
But something said, or brought to mind,
Had touched a sympathetic chord,
And soft, its trembling echoes chimed—
Each note was measured, and each word:
"My friend," said he, "your language chaste,
Has fallen on my spirit drear,
Like summer shower on barren waste,
Or dulcet note on wistful ear!
Long years have passed in sadness by,
Since sounds, so mellow-toned and sweet,
Like minstrel music of the sky,
My soul have cheered, though fain to greet!
Ah, yes! 'tis true I have a wife,
Who once, with bright and placid brow,
Was all my joy—and all my life,—
But, we are poor, forsaken now!
My children too, though young and small,
Are crushed to earth, dejected, sad;
Reproach and shame their souls inthrall,
And like poor beggars they are clad.

But as for me—*my* doom is sealed!
The cold, unfeeling, scorning world
Against my soul is madly steeled,
And thick around its shafts are hurled.

And yet, you speak of HOPE for me!
For wife and children, smiles and joy;
Of glistening eyes, and sportive glee;
Of peace and love without alloy!—
Ah, Sir," continued he, "I know
There *was* a time—ere this sad dearth!
When all those pleasing charms did flow
Upon my heart, and 'ronnd my hearth!"—
Then sudden paused, lest to his mind
This casual retrospect might bring
Some imagery which Hope designed
In days all bright and promising.—
When I, to save the vantage gained,
Resumed my task with buoyant heart,
Assured, indeed, I had attained
A victory, at least, in part;
For as he closed his truthful tale,
Deep from his bosom rose a sigh;
His motley cheek turned ashy pale,
And tears, provoked, bedimmed his eye!

My mind was filled with argument,
But much regretted lack of skill
Aptly to range, and best present
Them to his pronely stubborn will.
Yet true *experience* forms a chain
Both strong and endless, ever new;
With which, I bound his soul again,
And closer still each link I drew;
Until, o'ercome, he trembling cried:
"Will you, my wife that story tell?
About the boy whose Mother died—

It shows our own sad case so well!—
'Tis true, *my* wife is yet alive,
But she is feeble, sad, and ill,
And oft beyond her strength will strive,
Her painful duties to fulfill.
And, Sir, we have a favorite son,
A noble-hearted, dear good boy,
(Now on a foolish errand gone,)
Who is our comfort, stay, and joy;
And who, whenever she is sick,
Will watch attentively around
Each want to serve, so mild and quick,
Our hearts to him are closely bound.

And oft when I have tarried late,
Lest she in loneliness should die,
With tireless soul by her he'll wait,
To cool her brow, and soothe each sigh.
And, Sir, it grieves my heart to own,
That not unfrequently I've stayed,
When she was wearied, sick, and lone,
Till morning broke the gloomy shade.
And then, so dutiful and kind,
So ready, when I bid him go,—
But, Oh! the thought has seized my mind,
Perhaps he's perished in the snow!
For *twice this day*, through storm so chill,
Quite thinly clad, and barefoot too,
I drove him far—*a can to fill!*
Which he the first time, failed to do;
And he's been gone so long, I fear
He's sick, or died upon the way;

In truth, I almost dread to hear
The real cause of his delay."

As earnest as Delilah sought
To learn where strength of Samson lay,
Had I employed each eager thought
To touch the spring his soul to sway;
And now 'twas forced upon my mind,
By his aniety and dread,
That through *this medium* I should find
Access to heart, as well as head!—
And, thus encouraged, I essayed
To cauterize the rankling wound,—
For all the progress thus far made,
Was only by such process found:—
My friend, said I, it seems to me
That if you have a child so dear,
As by your showing he must be,
I do not wonder you should fear!
For this has been a cheerless storm,
The wind quite piercing, damp, and cold;
Indeed, I scarcely could keep warm
With winter garments 'round me rolled.
—But, Sir, I think I now can read,
Or rather, that I understand
So well your mind, I must proceed
With that, which all your hopes command!
And while I make this warm appeal,
And add my earnest, heart felt prayer,
I trust your wounded soul will feel
Constrained by love my toil to share:—

For weeks, and months, said I, a child
Has daily passed our city streets,
Whose visage meager, wan, and wild,
Excites the gaze of all he meets.
And Sir, this morning, mid the snow
And rain and hail, descending fast,
My heart was pained his wants to know,
As, drenched and cold, he drooping passed.
But when, this afternoon, again
I saw him slow and sadly come,
I could not for my life refrain
From asking, *if he had a home!*
What else I said, or sought to know,
Need not be told, nor what I learned!
But hitherward, through wind and snow,
My anxious heart my footsteps turned.
And now, perhaps I owe to you
Acknowledgment for what I've done;
And why I sought this interview,
I should, at least in part, make known.

I then in brief, familiar style,
Rehearsed the scene as it occurred;
Observing carefully the while,
His eagerness to catch each word.
And on approaching near the close,
In speaking of the *empty can!*
His face quick flushed from blood that rose,
Then paled, as it receding ran!—
But Sir, forbear your slightest frown
Upon the poor defenceless child;
His little heart is now borne down

With pond'rous fears and tortures wild :
Upon myself alone, must fall
Reproof or censure, or your ire ;
He's free from fault, and blameless all—
He could not get the liquid fire !—
" But where is he ?" again he sought,
With husky voice, and frenzied eye ;
" I've suffered much in painful thought,
Lest with the babe, he too, should die !"

The child, said I, though faint, is well ;
And, as you love your darling son,
Would you the rest, *his* tongue should tell,
Or shall I still, employ my own ?
—But I beheld with thrilling joy,
The hopeful crisis had arrived,
And made a signal, which the boy
At once obeyed as was contrived.
And ere the father could reply,
Or apprehend the complot plan,
The trembling child with upturned eye,
Was by his side with *shoes and can !*—
The harmless ruse like magic wrought
Upon his agitated mind ;
And eagerly his son he caught
With outstretched arms and feelings kind.
They seemed bewildered with delight,
And overcome with joy unknown :
Like culprits 'scaped from dungeon-blight,
On whom once more the sunlight shone.
Each vainly tried to vent his heart,
But lip and tongue refused their aid ;

The eye alone could act this part,
But that, its fluent powers displayed!

With awe, I scanned the thrilling scene,
And trembled at th' unequal strife:
Their fate indeed, seemed poised between
The doom of death—and light of life!
But memory's wing with solace fraught,
Swept o'er my soul and brought relief—
And hope revived from view I caught
Of David and Philistia's chief!
And soon perceived the son's embrace
A kindling flame through sire had shed,
As, raising slow his piteous face,
He looked on me, and humbly said,
"Do you proceed, kind Sir, for sure
I am that none unswayed by love
Of that they wished to win or cure,
Could by *such* acts their kindness prove."

My friend and brother, then, again
I'll make a brief appeal to you,
Still more direct, perhaps, and plain,
Pray ponder it, in solemn view:—
Will you renounce from this good hour
The liquid fire—the poison bowl!
And break the demon's fatal power,
To save from shame your deathless soul?
Shake off the fetters that have bound
You to this little *whisky can*—
Embrace the means I now propound,
And be once more, a happy man!—

With this I paused, and for a space
In writhing agony he stood;
His heart's red blood suffused his face,
And gushing tears rolled down aflood!

The little boy stood trembling by
In all his wretchedness and fears,
With fluttering heart, and wondering eye,
So strange, to see his father's tears!—
While I gazed on with thought intent,
And prayerful watched the mental strife:
The "strong man armed," on ruin bent,
The soul, contending fierce for life!—
At length, a shout went up the sky:
"The struggle's o'er,—record my vow!
'Tis DO and LIVE,—or, DRINK and DIE!
Give me the Pledge, I'll sign it now!"

With pressure warm I seized his hand,
And faintly told my heartfelt joy
In kindest mood I could command,
And language best I could employ.
And when the first wild overflow
Of feeling and surprise was spent,
I urged that he should straightway go
And tell the wife of his intent.
To which he quickly made reply:
"Dear Sir, so well you've managed all,—
So worthless do I feel, that I
Opine *that* task on you must fall."
Upon this point we soon agreed,
For all my heart was now engaged;

And with his aid to intercede
An easy conquest was presaged.

But I was struck, on our return,
To see the house itself, transformed;
Nor less surprised was I to learn
The fervent love her bosom warmed:
Her babe, white robed, before her lay,
While all absorbed with grief she stood,
And pensively, I heard her say,
"Though deep the wound, the Lord is good."
—A sense of awe, or timid dread
Passed o'er my mind like chilly cloud,
Lest I should mar by voice or tread
Her soul all centered in that shroud!—
But soon she turned her tearful eye
From off the idol of her care,
Remarking, with a deep-drawn sigh,
"Farewell sweet babe,—surpassing fair."
—Till now, I had not scanned her face,
Nor sought her mind or heart to know,—
But lengthened years will not erase
From memory's chart their beauteous glow.
The placid, calm, and gentle shade
That overspread her features all,
Served to enhance the impress made,
As when soft clouds round sunset fall.
There was a peerless matron air
O'ershadowing her stately form,
Which, aided by affection rare,
Evinced a soul to virtue warm.
The ease and grace with which she spoke,

(Although oppressed and sad and faint,)
Within my breast a feeling woke,
That quite relieved me of restraint.
No fancied sketch of romance rare,
By matchless skill of genius wrought,
With truth's strange beauties can compare,
Tho' dressed in humblest vein of thought.

Madam, said I, (although I felt
Somewhat at loss for words to use,)
The Lord with you has kindly dealt,
Nor will you sure his grace abuse.
'Tis true, the world has coldly frowned,
And that your little babe is dead;
Yet you are not in sorrows drowned,
Nor yet has hope forever fled!
—How oft a dark portentious cloud,
With threat'ning gloom our fears menace,
Yet serves but briefly to enshroud
The sun's effulgent, cheering face:
So Providence mysterious deals
With more mysterious, sinful man,
By warnings mild, or thundering peals,
As best will mete out Mercy's plan.
—How oft, while we desponding weep
O'er sorrows, troubles, and distress;
Or wail our fate o'er waters deep
And wide, and dark and fathomless,
Are we surprised, when made to know
That all our fancied fears are vain,
And that those threat'ning ills but show
His kind regard our souls to gain.

—And thus it seems he has with you,
Unsparingly, permitted ill—
Your rugged path with thorns to strew—
Your stricken heart with grief to fill,
That in his own peculiar way
His mercy might more vivid shine,
And you most truthfully might say,
'His ways, though dark, are all divine.'

"Ah, Sir," said she in deepened tone,
"Your kind reproofs my heart assail;
That God is good, I freely own,
But oh! what power can rend *that veil?*
'Tis not, that poverty and shame
Have triumphed o'er my hopes and fears;
A trifle this, I scarce would name
As worthy of a woman's tears;
'Tis not, that death's relentless dart
Has struck my infant to the tomb!
A fiercer scourge afflicts my heart,
And wraps my soul in utter gloom!—
Time was, when I could hope, and pray,
When love and light illumed my path;
But, Sir, those joys have passed away,
And given place to cankering wrath!"

But, lest unguarded, she might say
Something unwittingly, and throw
Impediments within my way,
I deemed it meet to let her know
With what success my heart was cheered,
And what I hoped to see fulfilled;

Assuring her the storm she feared,
Tho' rife with dread, was calmly stilled:—
There stands the partner of your woes,
Perhaps the cause of all your grief,
Prepared a secret to disclose
That will insure you all relief!
Behold him, tottering, trembling, pale,
Impaired by wretchedness and strife;
But *now* resolved, (and will prevail,)
Henceforth to lead a *sober* life!
To consummate so rich a boon,
And chase those gloomy clouds away;
To change your midnight into noon,
And bask in sunlight's cheering ray,
'Tis barely needful now, that you
Embrace with him the only means
That hope of Heaven presents to view—
The only shield that safely screens!

Although she fully understood
The purport of this grand design,
Yet, how to 'scape the fiery flood,
She could not in her heart divine.
For not till this propitious hour
Had they e'en heard the joyous sound
That thrilling came from Baltimore—
Of men reformed—and lost ones found!—
But soon the novel tale was told,
How myriads, sunk in deep despair,
Had risen up with purpose bold,
And signed the Pledge, its sweets to share.

I could not chide or harsh upbraid,
Nor probe too deep her bosom's pangs,
Lest counter will might be arrayed,
For she had felt the serpent's fangs!
But fresh from memory's fount I drew
The outlines of a piteous case,
So life-like and so deftly true
She could but feel each pencil-trace.
Most eagerly I watched, and prayed,
While she in mute and deep surprise,
The picture scanned and well surveyed,
Till tears repentant dimmed her eyes.
—Then turning to her husband near,
Who, wrapped in silence, moveless stood,
And whispered something to his ear
That roused him from his thoughtful mood.
And as I hopeful strove the while
With meekest skill their strife to quell,
I caught the semblance of a smile,
More joyous far than words can tell.

I felt that victory was mine,
That Hope had shed its radiant beam;
That they the glorious pledge would sign,
And triumph o'er their maddening dream.
And from my pocket quick I drew
A copy of that *magic chart*,
Whose healing virtues very few
For mines of gold would freely part!—
Beside their babe, all still and cold,
Enshrouded in its robe of white,
The pledge I carefully unrolled,

With implements for them to write.
I then retired a little space,
That they more freely might commune,
Conjuring them to seek for grace,
To gain relief so opportune.

I soon returned, for well I knew
The crisis rife with hope was filled:
Four names, well written, met my view,
Witnessed by tear-drops fresh distilled.—
My friends, said I, now let us raise
A heart-felt prayer to God above,
And blend our gratitude and praise
For this expression of his love.
And lowly 'round the altar, new,
In humble attitude we bowed;
Presenting to the Saviour's view
A group, resembling much the crowd
That followed him when here below,
Soliciting his tender care,
And crying in their shame and woe
"O Lord, thou Son of David, spare!"—
Our hearts were blessed—and as we prayed,
I felt the Spirit's power within;
By faith I claimed the promised aid
For these poor souls o'erwhelmed in sin;
Beseeching God, for Jesus' sake,
To bless them with his smile again,
That they might each His grace partake;
Commingled with their meek, *amen!*

And now, admonished by the gloom
  Autumnal evenings sometimes wear,
I left them in their *living tomb*,
  With trifling funds I then could spare:
Consoling them as best I could,
  And promising, again to call
And furnish them with needed food,
  Although my means I knew were small.
Then shaking cordially each hand,
  Reluctantly I bade farewell
To this unknown, but rescued band,
  Whose grateful tears in torrents fell.

Two days elapsed, and yet I found
  No time convenient to perform
The task upon myself I bound,
  To succour them with friendship warm.
But on the third, at early hour
  I started on my mission there,
With means sufficient in my power,
  And heart disposed with them to share.—
Upon approaching near the place,
  My eager eye instinctive sought
To catch a glimpse of some one's face,
  For whom I now had comfort brought.
But lo, the joy that I had felt—
  The recompense I hoped to gain,
I found alone in fancy dwelt,—
  Which turned my pleasure into pain!
For, upon opening the door,
  I saw they had departed all,
And my lone footsteps on the floor

Resounded like sepulchral hall.—
And all the tidings I could gain
In reference to their sudden flight,
Did but in part the fact explain,
And left the whole in mystery quite:—

It seems, the day succeeding that
On which their little infant died,
A stranger on his wagon sat,
As if persuading them to ride!
But who he was, or whence he came,
Or what direction did pursue;
Or where he lived, or what his name,
I could not gain the slightest clue!—
I therefore soon retraced my track,
Pondering the while the sudden change
That had so quickly brought me back,
Indulging doubts and musings strange.
And constantly for many days
My mind was troubled and distressed;
And vainly, as when fever preys,
I sought relief, but found no rest!
Could I but hear one soothing word—
That they were faithful and sincere,
My turbid mind, like waters stirred,
Would soon be tranquilized and clear.—
But time rolled on, and still no trace,
Or slightest circumstance revealed
Where they had sought a dwelling place,
Nor why they thus should be concealed.
And even after months had passed,
And busy cares my thoughts had quelled,

Whene'er I heard the chilly blast
Their wretchedness I still beheld.

Sometimes, by pleasing hope inspired,
A happy group my fancy drew,
Arrayed in smiles, with peace attired;
With plenty crowned, and pleasures true.—
And oft, again, at midnight hour,
While my dear household calmly slept,
By some pervading mystic power,
O'er visions strange, I've waked and wept!
And, though convinced my dreams were vain,
Still alternating hopes and fears,
Like treacherous winds on trackless main,
Had lured me on for months and years!
Till, yielding to the weight of care,
My mind, engrossed with other things,
Had ceased in fantisies to share,
Reposing on its weary wings,—
In hope of pure domestic joy,
And greater share of peaceful rest;
To feast my heart with sweet employ,
By hovering round my chosen nest.

PART SECOND.

SEQUEL TO THE MYSTERIOUS CAN.

But "truth, more stange than fiction" far,
At length the seeming mystery solved;
And, lest cold, studied art should mar
The thrilling tale so well evolved,
In his own words I will repeat
The graphic sequel, as it fell
Upon my ear in accents sweet
As dulcet notes of chiming bell.—
One bright May morning, as I strolled
In pensive mood from street to street,
I met a man with contour bold,
Whose beaming eye gave cordial greet;
He seized my hand with friendly clasp,
And pressed it with familiar force;
And, though I shrank not from the grasp,
I thought he was deceived of course!
And therefore with a dubious smile
I volunteered for him excuse.

Yet firm he held my hand the while,
Resolved conviction to produce!—
Improving well the little space,
I scanned his visage o'er and o'er,
But no familiar line could trace,
Nor feature I had seen before!

At length he said, "Dear friend, you seem
At loss to know who thus so rude
Disturbs the pleasure of your dream,
Or dares thus boldly to obtrude.
But Sir, believe me when I say,
Till life's last setting sun I view,
Or reason dims its lucid ray,
I'll crave kind Heaven to smile on you."

I pray you, Sir, said I, explain!
Ere you such kind advances make,
(Indeed, I feared he was insane,)
For sure, you're laboring through mistake!
But pressing closer still my hand,
With meekly-turned and melting eye,
And voice subdued, yet rich and bland,
He calmly made me this reply:—
"That you should fail to recognize,
Or that my conduct should seem strange,
Does not excite the least surprise,
For well I know—*how great the change!*
But, Sir, permit me now to crave
Your pardon for my seeming bold,
Persuaded you will freely waive
The usual forms of custom old;

One question only I'll propound—
Or bring one circumstance to view,
And if in error I am found,
I'll humbly make confession due:—
Do you remember, Sir, the day,
About two years and half ago,
That, brother-like, you urged your way
Through reeking storm of rain and snow,
To save a poor degraded man
From sinking in the drunkard's tomb—
How well you triumphed in your plan,
And saved him from that awful doom?
Ah, Sir, you must, I dare allege,—
And with what glowing joy you smiled
When he subscribed the Temperance Pledge,
Which lay beside his lifeless child!"

Remember?—Yes, said I.—but tell,
I pray you, tell me if you can,
How has he fared? Where does he dwell?
Are you acquainted with the man?—
Indeed, I had so much to ask—
So many queries to propose,
He seemed bewildered with the task,
And brought me to a sudden close,
By breathing in my startled ear:
"*I am that man!* my friend, most dear!"
And showed the pledge—the very same,
To which he had subscribed his name!

I must forbear t'indulge my pen,
Though much disposed, to sketch the MAN,

Who now might rank with noblest men;
So late a slave to *whisky-can!*
But soon persuaded him to go
Into my dwelling, near at hand,
That I might hear and fully know
The history of his little band.—
And being seated, I expressed
The strong desire I felt to hear
How he had fared, and how progressed;
And what his present prospects were;
Assuring him that oft I'd thought
Of him, and his, with deep concern,
And that, though various means had sought,
No information could I learn.

"My friend," said he, "'twill gratify,
And much relieve my burdened heart
With your kind wishes to comply,
As memory serves me to impart:—
The circumstances, till that night
When our poor little Willey died,
'Tis needless for me to recite—
Of *them*, you must be satisfied.—
But, Sir, although afflicted sore,
Bowed down to earth, besotted, blind;
Yet still, *that night* enriched me more,
Than all my former days combined!
My wife, and little girl and boy,
Wearied with woe, were wrapped in sleep,
While I, engaged in sad employ,
Beside the babe, did watch and weep.
But Sir, I'll not detain you long

By effort vain, that scene to scan;
For every evil thought and wrong
Of life, before my vision ran!
I felt convicted, and condemned,—
Without one cheering ray in view;
Turn as I would, my way was hemmed,
Until I to the Saviour flew:—
E'en beggared, bloated, loathsome all,
Just as I was, I sought to gain
His ear of mercy to my call,—
And Sir, I trust, sought not in vain!
For, be assured, from that good hour
The dismal clouds that wrapped my soul,
Through His rich grace and matchless power,
Were scattered all, and I made whole.—
Since then, my mind has been illumed,
My heart, with peace and love perfumed.
—But I must hasten on, nor dwell
Too long upon this thrilling theme,
For I have many things to tell,
Should you, dear Sir, unwearied seem.

"Quite early the succeeding morn,
In plain pine coffin, ready made,
By neighbors few, our babe was borne,
And buried 'neath a cedar shade.
I need not speak of our deep grief,
Nor yet how long our loss we wept;
But time at length, procured relief,
As moss and vines the grave o'ercrept.
—And now we trust he soars and sings,
With seraphs bright on shining wings.

"And Sir," said he, "kind Providence
Then seemed to lend especial care,
And wrought a shield for our defence
In manner quite unsought and rare:—
We had but recently returned
From the last sad and solemn rite
Of seeing the remains inurned,
And hid forever from our sight;
And close had gathered round the fire,
Each with sufficient food supplied
To serve the cravings of desire,
Which your kind favor did provide;—
When, to my joy and great surprise,
A brother, whom I loved, and feared!
(Although I scarce could trust my eyes,)
Before our lowly hut appeared!
I'll not attempt to sketch the scene,
So full of joy, and anguish too,
As it occurred ourselves between,—
Yet blessings crowned the interview.

"For many years we'd been estranged,
The fault was mine, full well I knew;
True, his kind heart had somewhat changed:
As mine obscured, his brighter grew!
—But after having all explained,
And humbly his forgiveness sued,
Resistlessly my soul he chained,
And cheered my wife's deep solitude.
—Sometime he peeringly surveyed
The fixtures, and our dwelling place,
The light obscure, and deepening shade;

Then spoke, with halfe-averted face,
And yet with feeling's deepest tone:
'My brother, dear, I'm pained indeed,
To meet you thus, depressed, and lone—
In squalid shame, and abject need!
But I have one request to make,
And hope my wish you'll gratify;
I make it for our mutual sake,
Quite sure your wife can but comply:
My team is standing on the street,
And in my house there's room to spare;
My wife will yours most joyous greet,
And with you all our comforts share.'

"And as he paused for a reply,
His very attitude said—Go!
And so appealing was his eye,
I could not for my life say—No!
—And suddenly, confusion reigned
In gathering up our scanty store;
Nor had the sun but slightly waned,
Ere we, all loaded, left the door.
And Sir, believe—in fact you know—
(At which rum sellers well might gloat,)
Our household stock, or duds of woe,
Were not all worth, a—*one £ note!*
But thus we started on our way,
With bleeding hearts—tho' prospect bright;
And soon our hut at distance lay,
All fast receding from our sight.
Yet, ere the vale and hills so drear,
Were lost entirely to our view,

For our poor babe, each dropped a tear,
And raised a silent prayer for you.

"Two days elapsed before we gained
The haven of our promised rest;
Not from the distance, but it rained,
Was cold, and we were thinly dressed!
At length, however, we were cheered
With hearty welcome and a smile;
Indeed, our friends at loss appeared,
How best they could our minds beguile!
In different rooms bright fires were lit,
And soon an ample table spread;
'Round which we all were made to sit,
With my good brother at the head.
—They had three children, full of glee,
Two lovely daughters and a son;
And, dinner over, they were free
With ours to gamble, play, and run,
While we, together with our wives,
In social intercourse, went through
A brief recital of our lives—
Of lights and shadows, strangely true
—But I must not prolong this theme,
However rich to me and dear,
All which to you may trifling seem,
The finale bland, you soon shall hear!

"Still, one more item ere I close
This portion of my narrative,
Which faintly will their hearts expose,
And disposition to relieve:—

As. early the next morn I rose,
What think you my surprise, to view
Beside our beds, a suit of clothes
For each arranged, entire, and new!
Pondering awhile, I gazed, perplexed,
And vainly sought our own to find.
I cannot say, that I was vexed,
Still, strange reflections filled my mind!
At length I spied a folded note,
Which modestly the whole explained,
By female hand, with pencil wrote:
'*A trifling gift, to brother gained.*'
—Our children still profoundly slept,
While we disguised ourselves in dress!
And when my wife the room had swept,
We sought our friends, to thank and bless.
—And when she to the room returned,
The children grieved because alone;
And though they saw her, yet concerned
They cried, 'Madam, where's Mother gone?'
In fact, when dressed, so strange the view,
They scarce themselves, each other knew!

"Well, Sir," continued he, "we stayed
With this kind brother, quite at ease,
Until arrangements could be made,
Which well he knew my mind would please.
Not distant far from where he dwelt
A pleasant, thriving village lay;
And, prompted by affection felt,
He purposed there to fix my stay.
Conversant with my tact in trade,

Familiar with the people there,
He bought a stock of goods, and made
Most liberal terms for me to share.—
With cheerful heart and right good will,
I re-commenced the world anew!
And by applying former skill,
A *rush of trade*, our store soon drew.

"We started on a basis pure;
For every thing, the cash was paid;
And then, to make assurance sure,
The like injunction strict was laid:
With but one price, at small advance,
With cash in hand, I long since learned
Were better far than *charge* and *chance*,
And profits too, more sure returned.
To this theorem true, I held,
Although at first some deemed it strange;
And soon our list of patrons swelled
Beyond our hope's most ardent range.
But Sir, I'll not minutely dwell
Upon this portion of my tale,
Lest time should fail me *that* to tell
Which you will not esteem so stale.
Let it suffice then, here to say,
That when the first year's trade was closed,
Without one dollar's debt to pay,
And such the confidence reposed,
My brother sought to be released
From all his interest in the trade,
Alleging that his cares increased;
And such arrangement soon was made.

But judge you, Sir, if well you can,
The wild surprise, when met my view
Th'exposure of his generous plan:
A full discharge, from all my due!

"And Sir, since then, success has crowned
The efforts of my willing hand;
And now, though long in fetters bound,
I'm free! with plenty at command.
And though 'tis through my brother's aid
I've gained this competence and rest,
Yet *you*, Sir, the foundation laid,
Deep in my heart by kind behest.
Nor have I heedlessly assumed
The pleasing task before me now;
Long, long I've sought, and importuned,
And even made a sacred vow,
Should circumstances e'er present
An opportunity and space,
I would my burdened bosom vent—
Ere fortune should a charm efface!—
And now, Sir, if your listening ear
Be not o'ertasked, I'll hasten through
What else perhaps you fain would hear,
At this refreshing interview."

[Till this remark aroused my mind,
So fixed had been my earnest heed,
I almost deemed the thought unkind,
And quick besought him to proceed.
His face now beamed with aspect mild,
His busy thoughts awhile communed;

At length he bowed, and meekly smiled,
And thus his narrative resumed:]

"My worthy friend, I've long detained
You with recital truly strange,
And yet my object's not attained;
I therefore beg the scene to change.
Indulge me with attentive ear,
And please the picture calmly view;
Behold its forms and features rare,
Presenting beauties rich and true:—
I barely need remind you here,
That when you sought my heart to win,
You found me in a hovel drear,
O'erwhelmed in sorrow, shame, and sin.
All which you saw; and well I know
How kind you took me by the hand,
And quenched the fire that caused my woe,
As though you swayed a magic wand.
Your noble work was well performed:
On Hope's bright star you fixed my eye;
My mind you cheered, my heart you warmed,
And from your purse gave free supply.
But these, in brief, have been detailed
As rapidly as thought could run;
And how, that night, I wept and wailed,
Till Mercy gained what means begun!
And also, my kind brother's aid,
In fact, the words are hardly cold;
All which, though bright, would quickly fade,
Unless the sequel too, be told!

" But Sir, to understand me now
You may indulge some latitude
To Fancy's art, while I will bow
To sober facts, or fair or rude :—
As yet, I lease a dwelling place,
Some sixty fathoms from the store ;
Between them spreads an open space,
With richest verdure covered o'er.
My house is large, and amply filled ;
Surrounded by ultroneous trees ;
In rear and front are gardens tilled,
One, serving us—the other, bees.—
True these are all mere trivial things,
That fail and perish soon by use,
As riches oft themselves take wings,
Lest suffering follow their abuse.
Still it is meet that we receive
With gratitude what Mercy lends :
And 'mong the best mind can conceive,
Are wife and children, home and friends.

" And here permit me, Sir, to claim
Your kind attention yet awhile ;
Although 'tis not my purposed aim
Your mind to charm, or heart beguile ;
Yet still I feel inclined to hope,
That while this closing scene you view,
Compressed of need to narrow scope,
Minute you'll note each mellow hue :
The outlines rude that meet your sight,
Will indicate my family
As it is grouped each morn and night,

In low and peaceful harmony.
Behold each form, and attitude;
The upturned eye, and passive hands;
The moving lip, with voice subdued,
And in their midst the altar stands.—
Yet, imagery and pencillings
That seem so beautiful to me,
Perhaps, like birds with viewless wings,
You may afar, regardless see!
But Sir, if possible, suppose
You occupy position near;
A closer view will traits disclose
That distance screens from vision clear.

"Your sympathies I know are kind,
You have a father's feeling heart;
And while I thus refresh my mind,
I trust you'll share an equal part.—
As yet, you've had but narrow view
Of that long barren, worthless field,
In which some seeds you fain did strew,
In hope, thro' grace, they'd grow and yield.
But now, as brothers, if you please,
Within those precincts fresh and green,
O'ershadowed by luxuriant trees,
We'll contemplate the beauteous scene:
Not house or fixtures, goods or store;
Nor gardens, trees, or trestled bowers;
But that which will delight you more
Than waving fields or blooming flowers.
These are convenient all, yet still
With only these, the heart were sad:

The grasping mind they ne'er could fill,
Nor yet the drooping heart make glad.

"But Sir, I feel my soul improve
By every day's domestic charms;
Though wife and children oft reprove,
I fold them closer in my arms!
For their rebukes are always kind,
Though piercing sometimes as a sword;
At first, with awe they strike the mind,
Then soothing balm they quick afford.
—A few examples you may deem
Not altogether out of place;
Indeed, necessity would seem
To claim them here with perfect grace.
One instance I remember well,
Will serve t' illustrate what I mean:—
It chanced one evening that I fell
Into a dozy, musing dream;
My wife, engaged with her own toil,
On which her thoughts intently ran;
The glimmering light requiring oil,
She harmless asked for—*that small can.*
And Sir, at once I was awake!
In agony! though not in pain;
Indeed my every nerve did shake!
I felt abashed, and sweat like rain!
—The simple sound of *that old can*,
E'en now strikes terror to my mind;
Yet serves the while like holy ban,
As needs must be, severely kind.

" Another case, I'll ne'er forget:
A poor, degraded, drunken man
My boy discovered, cold and wet,
Beside the road; and swift he ran
To tell me of the shocking sight,
In almost breathless haste and twattle;
And closing, cried from joy, or fright—
'He had no *can*—but 's broke his bottle!'
And then, as if to pierce me through,
My little girl, with drooping head,
Inquiringly besought to know,
'If *that* man's little boy was dead!'
—For many months such thrusts as these
Assailed me oft with keenest smart;
Yet, though my mind was ill at ease,
Still naught could awe my purposed heart.
Indeed, those slightly darkling shades
Served but t' enliven and endear
The mellow beauties that pervade
My Bow of Promise, bright and clear.

" Connected with, and running through
The rough-drawn sketch you lately saw,
Are traits and teints of various hue,
To which, attention let me draw.
No doubt you deemed, and judged aright,
That little group with features fair,
So meek and humble to the sight,
Were wont to bow in earnest payer.
And Sir, I must in truth confess
That *that* is what the picture means;
That thus, assisted by God's grace,

We bow, and each for manna gleans.
—Indeed it would refresh your heart
At eventide with us to share,
Or early morn, to take a part
In our accustomed hour of prayer.
And here permit a passing word,
Designed in nowise to offend,—
Our voice in prayer is seldom heard,
Unmindful of our *unknown friend !*—
Nor yet, kind Sir, can you e'er know
The length and breadth of that deep stream
That from our hearts commenced its flow
When first you broke our maddening dream.

" And being perfectly aware,
From circumstances long ago,
That you too, know the worth of prayer,
I will proceed its fruits to show.
You will excuse my earnest zeal
In trying to impress your mind
With those rich pleasures oft I feel,
Which spring from love and light combined.
And trust you'll not conceive it strange,
Nor deem me arrogantly vain,
In taking this familiar range,
Domestic matters to explain.
—'Tis true, my children's earlier years
Were dark, and unpropitious all;
Their hearts benumbed by frowns and fears,
And minds inwrapped in gloom and thrall!
But Sir, those clouds have disappeared;
Their hearts are gay and buoyant now;

Their minds enlarged, illumed, and cheered,
No more despondingly they bow!
Constant in school, at home docile;
Improvement seems their only pride!
Obedient, mild, and free from guile,
With hope to cheer, and truth to guide.

"Indeed, I feel that I am blessed;
Yes, 'blessed in basket and in store:'
Enough of worldly goods possessed
To spare a portion to the poor.
Yet far above all goods or gold,
Or joys that riches can confer,
As Spartan mother said of old,
'My children are my jewels,' Sir.
My wife is prudent, kind, and true;
Is all, indeed, a wife should be!
And with her lovely charms in view,
I feel, she's all the world to me!
—You saw her *once*, in deep distress,
All pallid, haggard, drenched in shame!
The bloom of health now decks her face,
And love-joys from her spirit flame.

"And now I fainly claim your mind,
E'en yet a little longer space,
With incidents so intertwined,
They seem entitled to your grace!
—Perchance from care or weariness,
Or other cause, no matter what,
We may have thought upon you less;
Or, for a time indeed forgot;

Yet such remissness cannot last,
For, scarce a day e'er passes by
But something will the mind o'ercast,
Or something bright salute the eye;
And bring to mind those gloomy days,
And scenes of anguish and of strife;
Or, gild our pathway with the rays
Of joys that glow with beauty rife.
And not unfrequently our minds
Are led to contemplations sweet,
By simple thought that ready finds,
On guileless tongue a form replete."

[I ventured here to interrupt
His rich recital, much perfumed,
Till we had dined, or rather *supped;*
'T was four o'clock when he resumed.]

"Now Sir," said he, "please bear in mind,
That while these minute things we scan,
'Tis needful you should be resigned
To feel yourself a child again;
Or, as good Cowper well did say
Of him 'who has a father's heart,
'He will not blush, in childish play,'
Though called 'to take a childish part.'
—One evening, seated 'round the fire,
With every needed good supplied
That craving heart could well desire;
Sufficient e'en each wish to chide!
As is my custom every night,
I was engaged in reading loud

The Precious Volume, Book of Light,
That scatters e'en the darkest cloud!
And as it chanced, I read that scene
Descriptive of relief from woe,
Two strange wayfaring men between,
Upon the road near Jericho,—
My heart was warmed, my eye bedimmed;
My wife and children fairly wept;
And while the lamp I slightly trimmed,
A little space in silence crept.

"Somewhat composed, again I read,
While they, especially each child,
Seemed all engaged, by feeling led,
To catch the words so well compiled!
And when the narrative disclosed
How kind the Good Samarian was,
To dress the wounds; and so disposed
To give relief, and plead his cause,
My little girl, quite overcome,—
'*Was that the man*,' she eager cried,
'Who was so kind, at our *old home*,
'When my poor brother Willey died?'
While John, half doubting, half ashamed,
To think his sister, younger too,
Should thus have thought, and even named,
What *now* he deemed as strictly true!—
And, following up the childish thought,
He said, 'I wish that man could see
Our nice *new home!* and all you've bought
For mother, sisters, and for me!
Wouldn't he be glad to see our store,

All full of pretty goods and *stuff!*
Where I'll be clerk in three years more;
Or soon as I am big enough!'

"'O, yes,' said she, 'and don't you think
He'd like to see us go to school,
All nicely dressed, as neat as pink,
And wrapped up warm when it is cool!
And wouldn't he be pleased to know
What good things now we have to eat;
How much in our two gardens grow;
How bright the flowers, and O, so sweet!
I know him too! and stood close by
His chair, although I did not speak;
And when he saw me grieve and cry,
His gentle hand caressed my cheek!'

"'*You* know him, sister dear,' said John,
'And so do *I*, nor shall I e'er
Forget the time I first gazed on
His lovely face, and saw a tear:
'T was when he met me in the storm,
So wet and cold I scarce could creep!
And while he tried my hands to warm,
I saw that good man fairly weep!—
Know him, indeed! but why go back?
I want to see him here, where we
Are now, and on this very *track!*
(Stamping the floor,) beside of me!'

"And so engaged their minds had been
In this desultory charade,

They had not thought, and much less seen,
What impress on our hearts was made.
Till suddenly, they paused, amazed,
As if aroused by thoughtful fears;
Alternately on us they gazed,
Until a smile stole through my tears;
When instantly, they rushing came
Like trembling fawns into my arms;
And ere they could indulgence claim
A fond embrace subdued alarms.
And soon in timid, artless vein,
Resumed their ever favorite theme;
And urged me o'er and o'er again,
By every art their minds could scheme,
T' induce me faithfully to seek
For you in every street and store,
And find you, should it take a week,
'Or else they'd tease me ten times more!'

"But all at once, a serious thought
Impressed their agitated hearts,
Which, when matured, was aptly brought
To aid them in their wary arts:
'You teach us, father, every day,
In faith, to ask for daily bread;
And always when we kneel to pray,
Before we eat, or go to bed,
You lead us to believe that all
The good or grace we crave or need,
If but by *faith* we humbly call,
The Lord, our wishes will succeed.
And frequently you fervent pray

That mercy may *his* steps attend ;
That light and peace may cheer the way
Of *that* kind-hearted, *unknown* friend !
And we believe your prayers are heard,—
But why must he remain *unknown ?*
Whene'er we hear that chilling word,
It sounds like lead upon a stone !
And now, dear father, as you soon
Will pass directly through the place
Where he fist met your little son
And soothed his heart with kind embrace,
Will not you pray this very night,
That you may find his peaceful home?
And then persuade him—not invite—
But bring him with you when you come.
And while you're gone *we'll* try to pray ;
Indeed we will ; and mother dear,
Does always pray when you're away,
And no one by but us to hear.'

" And Sir, I could not if I would
Resist their earnest, warm desire,
Though long their plea I had withstood,
Yet rather fanned than quenched the fire !
And on perceiving it was time
To close the evening's interview,
We knelt and prayed, with hope sublime,—
We prayed for mercy, and for you !—
And now, enlivened by rich grace,
My soul that grace would magnify ;
O'erjoyed to meet you face to face,
Blending our vision eye to eye,

This interview has been to me
As welcome as a summer rain;
And Sir, I trust erelong to be
Allowed to share the like again.

"But here permit me, Sir, to say
That my indebtedness to you
Can ne'er be cancelled but one way,—
Denied of this,—I'm bankrupt true!
Not at my counter, need you call,—
I make no such adjustments there;
But at my house, and in my hall,
There, our accounts we will compare:
There are my witnesses and yours,
Who, as you've learned, can counsel too!
And there, while light of life endures,
The course you marked will we pursue.
And Sir, I hope you will embrace
The earliest hour you may incline;
For they do long to see your face,
And 'round your neck their arms entwine.
Till then, my friend, the sketch I've drawn,
Though rude indeed, the painting be,
I'll leave upon your mind in pawn,
For you to scan more leisurely.

"But, Sir, as we possess no right,
Inherent or by guarantee,
'T were well to keep in constant sight
The frailness of mortality.
Therefore, should Providence, or chance,
Another meeting contravene,

I trust this sketch will serve t' enhance,
And keep our bonds of friendship sheen.
And oft as memory may incline
Its parts to trace, or dark or light,
You need not deem, or e'en opine
One shade too deep, or hue too bright.
Still it is true, I'm well aware,
Crude imperfections may appear,
Which skill and taste with slightest care,
Would much improve and render clear.
And more particularly so
In reference to those lighter teints,
Designing childish traits to show,
Sinking almost to fruitless feints!
But Sir, I know your feeling heart
And pure discriminating mind,
Will prompt a father's willing heart
To screen those faults from scoffs unkind!

"This day, dear Sir, we've spent in peace;
Communed as friends—as friends have wept;
Our souls, I trust, have gained increase,
While Mercy's wing has o'er us swept.
Full well I know you've caught each word,
And scored it deep in Memory's chart;
And Sir, I hope what you have heard,
May serve to warm and stir your heart.
And as you now are fully sure
Your labor was not all in vain,
Be still encouraged to endure,
E'en nobler conquests to obtain:—
For all around, on every hand,

This dread sirocco, base and vile,
Sweeps o'er our sad, polluted land,
New victims daily to beguile.
—Oh, curse of curses! Who shall draw
From fountain pure, sufficient light
To purify our statute law,
And guard the freeman's dearest right?

"But, my dear friend, I soon must close,
As earth's diurnal rapid flight,
Which nought of pleasure can oppose,
Will soon eclipse yon King of Light;
And those long, trembling shades presage
In silent sweetness eve's approach,
Suggesting, e'en as bending age,
A thought my heart forbids encroach!
And ere compelled to give it sound,
Permit me once again to say,
That no excuse, howe'er profound,
Those anxious hearts will e'er allay:
For well I can anticipate
The twattle of their Babel-tones,
When I divulge this *tete-a-tete*,
To my delighted little ones.
Indeed I feel somewhat oppressed—
Oppressed with pleasure and with pain,
(Excuse the paradox confessed,)
To think, how can I all explain!
And therefore beg you, if you please,
Suggest a time when you will come;
As that will slightly serve t' appease,
Till we shall greet you at our home.

—You need not fix the hour, nor day,
But let it not be distant far;
Yet let me hint, come when you may,
By wind or steam, by coach or car,
Of one thing, Sir, be on your guard,
And stock yourself with full supplies:
For, else with stoic mind prepared,
They'll drain your heart, or drown your eyes.

"But ere we part, perhaps 'tis due
To notice that my oldest child
Has not been even brought to view,
While others all our time have whiled.
'Tis not because I prize her less,
Nor that she less deserves our care;
She was our comfort in distress,
And our supporter in despair!
Yes, ever since her little hand
Was strong enough to knit and sew,
It has obeyed her heart's command—
A heart all love and light and glow!
But, as her face you've never seen,
Let it suffice, Sir, here to say,
We deem her now our peerless queen,
And yield to her domestic sway!

"But Sir, I must not lightly waste
The time so precious and so brief;
But homeward speed with rapid haste,
And give your weary mind relief.—
Yet still, one moment more I crave,
My deepening gratitude to tell,

Which, like the sea, wave after wave,
  Grows deeper from each rolling swell.
And, friend most dear, ere now we part,
  Your strong right hand once more I'll pı
To catch its zeal, and potent art,
  So skilled to soothe—so trained to bless.
And then, with feasted heart and soul,
  I'll hasten home my joys to tell;
And count the hours that slow will roll,
  Till there, we meet again—FAREWELL."

PART THIRD.

EXPOSTULATORY.

Again, kind reader, it appears
  Appropriate for me to speak,—
But first, permit my flowing tears
  Their wonted ebbing place to seek!
A favor, far less timid sought
  By reason needless to be told:
Your mind like sympathy has caught,
  And your like weakness makes me bold.
Yet be assured, I'm not inclined
  To weary you with words alone;
Nor would a thought present to mind,
  My object will not well atone.

The *Oil Can Narrative* is closed;
  The Sequel, too, my friend has told;
And you, who have felt so disposed,
  Have pondered o'er what they unfold,
And long ere this have been constrained
  To steel your hearts against the foe;

Nor longer need to be detained
  Its deep-dyed cruelties to know!
—Yet fear my spirit has impressed
  That those there are I fain would reach,
For whom my heart is sore distressed,
  Those simple truths may fail to teach.
To such, I therefore, would appeal,
  While yet they share the mind of man;
For well I know the woes they feel,
  Long ere they'd screen it in a *can!*

Intemperance, all admit to be
  An evil of the grossest kind:
E'en tipplers, drunkards, here agree;
  Nor yet are *moderate drinkers* blind!—
And startling facts of want and woe,
  Of shame and crime of deepest hue,
With force combine most plain to show
  That blindness screens but very few!
—All, *all*, have seen its rolling flood,
  In dread, resistless fury sweep;
Its turgid waves all stained with blood,
  Enough to make e'en angels weep!
And yet, we can not fully know,
  Nor comprehend their vast extent:
We see its fiery surges flow,
  And view the waste its flames present,
But far beyond our narrow ken
  Their ravages still burn and blight;
Where wrecks of mind, and souls of men,
  Lie buried in eternal night!
We see th' afflicted mother weep,

And o'er her desolation mourn ;
Yet who can know her anguish deep,
Whose tenderest ties of love are torn ?

Go stand you at Niagara's base ;
Behold that torrent's awful leap ;
Wave after wave rolls on apace,
And ceaseless columns plunge the deep !
You see its upwhirled clouds of spray,
And hear the thunder of its pulse-like beat;
Yet who so skilled in algebra,
As for one hour its drops repeat !
Majestic river—bounding stream,—
Of countless drops, minute, combined ;
Each, radiant once with placid gleam,
While rolling in the lake resigned ;
Till, urged by flood or wind or rain,
Impelled by inclination too,
Or soon, or late, the current gain,
Commingling with companions new !
Awhile they journey on all gay,
Delighted with increasing speed ;
And sportively pursue their way
Without a fear, without a heed !
But soon the rapids, rough and strong,
Whose dashing, whirling waters urge
Each little drop to haste along
To swell the tumult and the surge.—
Thus, in commotion's rudest form
Their energies and force are bound ;
And in this wild bewildering storm
They blindly leap th' abyss profound.

And thence, as on and on they run,
By strange vicitudes are tost:
Some few are drawn up by the sun,
The residue, in ocean lost.

Thus is it with the drinking throng:
They once enjoyed a scene of pride;
But, listening to the Circean song,
They dared to try th' inviting tide!
And for a time they sportive sipped
Th' enchanting wine from goblets bright;
And mid the scenes of pleasure tripped,
With hearts elated, proud, and light.
But soon, the rapids, they too gain,
And onward rush with reckless speed;
Until, with frenzied, maddened brain,
They plunge the vortex, dark indeed!—
And, else by some benignant hand
Outstretched, with skill to save,
And power supreme impose command,
The drunkard sinks in hopeless grave!
Pause drinker, pause, reflect awhile,
And ponder well my simile;
Let not this scourge your soul beguile,
Till Fate shall seal your destiny!
—Yet, lest you scoff my object kind,
Or deem the effort vain and rude,
A moment, longer, be resigned
To scan one more similitude:—

Go, stand you on the mountain side,
Or gain an elevation near,

While sulphury clouds its summit hide,
And far above, red flames appear!
This exhibition truly grand,
May well the mind with awe inspire;
Nor can the rock-girt mount withstand
The furious waves of boiling fire!
See rushing streams of lava leap
From cliff to cliff in wild delight;
Or madly plow a channel deep,
The fertile plains to flood and blight.—
Behold, the blast now veers the cloud,
Composed of ashes, steam, and smoke;
And darkness spreads its sable shroud,
Wrapping the mountain in its cloak.
Yet still its trembling roar you hear,
Terrific to the timid soul;—
Amazed you stand, benumbed with fear;
Yet louder still its thunders roll!—
Ah, who shall fathom the extent,
Or mark the range of heat intense!
No data can its depth present,
Nor scale compute its glow immense!
—But cast around your wistful eye,
Behold a scene, with dread replete:
Vast plains engulfed, and valleys lie
Entombed and smothered 'neath your feet;
And in the distance, Pompeii—
With all its host, for ages dumb;
And farther still, you can descry
The grave of Herculaneum!—
Those cities, once the marts of trade;
Of princely dwellings, halls of pride—

All thronged with men of lofty grade,
While plebeian myriads swelled the tide:
O'er whom, while joy their spirits flushed,
And they in faithless trust reposed,
The mountain torrent wildly rushed,
And total darkness 'round them closed!

Long centuries have since passed by,
Yet history glimmers o'er their tomb:—
There, sits the babe with laughing eye,
And there, the maiden in her bloom;
There, parents, lovers, princes sleep,—
All life-like, in those deeps profound;
O'er whom will angels vigils keep
Till judgment's trumpet-note shall sound!
And when that startling peal shall break
The dusty bands that bind them there,
You, too, poor drinker, must awake!
And with that startled throng appear.
—But, mark the difference in their plea,
From that which you can dare to show:
They sank beneath stern destiny,—
But *you*, to suicidal blow!—
And, congregated there, will stand
A host beyond all number, doomed,
Who spurned kind Mercy's mild command,
And scoffed the Rose that for them bloomed!
Who, swayed by folly's luring dream,
Unmindful of reprovings mild,
Discarded peace, and sought the stream
Whose waves are fraught with horrors wild!

Intemperance! Oh, thou Tyrant-King!
Too long thy sceptre Earth has scathed,—
Thy piercing sword with poison sting
In blood of souls too long been bathed!
Yet while we mourn the drunkard's fate,
And grieve o'er wrecks of men and mind,
Base *venders*, shielded by the State,
Complacent smile,—that Law is blind!—
No craft or calling, trick or trade,
From which so much despair is welling;
Or half the shame and sorrow made,
As that of fiendish, vile rum-selling!
Of all the powers that work deceit,
And human woes and tortures swell,
None can compare, or e'en compete—
None tends so vast to people hell!—
And though, perchance, it may be true,
That those there are, who sometimes feel
Disposed in proper light to view
The gloomy picture facts reveal;
Yet, *circumstances* oft oppose;
And *interest*, perhaps, deters,—
And oft, when light of conscience glows,
The *selfish* heart, with stealth confers!

Could human woe the vender teach—
Or could he hear his victims wail!
Would not their cry his conscience reach?
His adamantine heart assail?—
How many weary thousands weep,
Oppressed with vagrant want and woe;
How many sleep the drunkard's sleep

In caverns dark, and vaulted low;
How many mourners, drooping sad,
With weeds all wet with bitter tears;
How many youths, nor fed nor clad,
Whose hearts are paralized with fears;
How much dread poverty and pain,
Disease, distress, despair, and dearth,
This scourge of scourges in its reign
Has wrought upon this lovely earth,
No language fully can portray,
Nor skillful thought their bounds survey,—
No computation can define,
By figures drawn in lengthened line!

And here I would enquire of those
Who boast of Freedom, Virtue, Truth,
If they are willing to impose
These woes upon their country's youth?
They soon will form life's active throng—
By honor crowned, or shame depressed;
And wield a power of right, or wrong,
To be enjoyed, or be—redressed!—
And, Who, permit me to enquire,
Th' enigma strange, can reconcile:
Why Liberty and Law conspire
To fan the flames of FREEDOM's pile?
Another, stranger far I trow,
Which Death itself must e'en deride:
Behold! though Light and Knowledge flow
As free as air or rolling tide,
That curse of curses of the still,
Sends forth its direful, damning flames,

The souls of men to crush and kill,
And by our Law, protection claims!
A principle so gross, absurd,
That naught but shame and guilt invole,
Can only be by fiends conferred,
In pandemonium resolve!—
As well the dove, by nature blessed
With temper of the mildest mood,
Might coo a *viper* to her nest,
And with its *venom* feed her brood!

I censure not "the powers that be,"
Nor of their *acts* would I complain;
They are but *creatures*, all agree,
And all their *force*, from us obtain:
The People merely delegate
Their power to instruments of choice,
Whose duty 't is to legislate
Conformably to public voice!
These facts are plain, and fully known—
So perfectly all understand
The principles thus briefly shown,
I need not waste another sand.
And none, unless perversely blind,
Or wholly lost to sense of shame,
Will seek a subterfuge to find—
The fact is clear,—*we're all to blame!*
And just so long as we consent
To be the dupes of *party zeal*,
And bow our necks, with meek content,
Regardless of the general weal,
So long will demagogues display

Their utmost energy and will
To lead the minds of men astray,
Subverting truth and worth and skill!
Indeed, so long has Vice controlled,
And trampled on God's heritage—
So long has foul pollution rolled
Amid the actors on the stage,
That naught but pure, decided men,
With all the force that Truth can urge,
Will e'er restore our rights again,
And quell the soul-destroying scourge!

And, though I hold no Prophet's pen,
Nor claim superior skill of sight,
Yet in the distance of my ken
I see the Harbinger of Right:
There is a cloud in yonder sky,
Although not larger than the hand,
That will o'ershadow by-and-by,
This weary, stricken, tortured land.
Men will not always meekly bear,
Like beasts of burden, menial slaves,
The yoke Intemperance makes them wear,
Nor doom themselves to drunkards' graves.
—And He, who sits enthroned on high,
All-wise, all-just, and merciful,
With jealous supervisal eye,
Observes each drone, and dutiful:
Whate'er our faith or practice be—
Our code or creed, it matters not;
Or Jew or Gentile, bond or free,
Or Christian, Turk, or Hottentot;

To Him, we all allegiance owe,—
And were His perfect law our guide,
The tears that now in torrents flow,
Throughout the world, would soon be dried.

APOSTROPHE TO ALCOHOL.

Thou fiend, most flagitious! Producer of strife!
Thy spirit is fraught with the furies of life!
Thy name is abhorrent—thy character base;
The stain of thy poison no throes can erase.
Thy sting, like the adder's, with venom is fraught—
Thy bite, like the serpent's, sad ruin has wrought!
Nor deepest researches of science or mind,
For centuries long could an antidote find.—
The Wine that enlivens the bride and the groom,
Oft serves to embitter the tears of the tomb;
The Nectar that sparkles and gleams in the bowl,
But preys on the vitals and darkens the soul.—
Thy features, more potent, in magnitude swell—
All tending to kindle the tortures of hell!
They enter the humble abode of the poor,
Transforming the blithe to the veriest boor;
They ravage the mansion of comfort and joy,
The richest of pleasures to taint and destroy;

The palace of plenty—the home of the wise,
They stealthily sally, and take by surprise!
They seize on the brave, the pure, and the best,
And torture the spirit that 'lumined the breast;—
Aye, even the watchman, whose mission was mild,
The arts of this Demon have often beguiled!
And soon, from his lofty position and place,
Have hurried him down to the slough of disgrace.—
They strike the fond parent with palsying dread,
And blast the sweet hopes that affection had shed:
Assailing the offspring with withering blow,
Engendering discord, contention, and woe!
They sadden reflection, and sway stern controll
O'er every emotion and spring of the soul;
The intellect shatter—estranging the heart,
And break the soft tendrils of friendship apart.
—In fact, the base Spirit of Alcohol bears
More mischief and madness, and soul-blighting cares;
More sorrow and sadness, and woes to mankind,
Than pestilence, famine, and war, all combined!—
The glow of that ether which shines in the bowl,
And the sound of its revels, are death to the soul:—
'Tis seen like the flame of the red lightning's flash,
And heard as the voice of the thunderbolt's crash!
It deluges Nations, polluting the air;
And flies like the tempest, on wings of despair!

PART FOURTH.

TEMPERANCE PLATFORM.

PROEM.

These sketchings few, present to view,
In colors plain, unvarnished,
An evil dire, whose scathing fire
Our Country's Fame has tarnished;
But con them o'er ye men of lore,
Of sympathy and feeling,
And in the light of Truth and Right,
Discern the *means* of healing.
Your country needs, your neighbor pleads,
Your friends and brothers press you,
While children dear, with hopeful tear,
Persuasively caress you;
And we implore, that evermore,
You'll act like sons of Sages,
And ply your VOTE—sure antidote—
To bless all coming ages.

WHEREAS,
Too long we've slept, while Pity wept
O'er Genius, prostrate lying,
While through the State, like shafts of Fate,
Rum's arrows thick were flying.
The pride and boast of Freedom's host,
With modest Worth and Valor,
Have oft been seen with haggard mien,
And veiled in ghostlike pallor.
And mid the storm the stately form
Of Symmetry and Beauty,
We've seen defiled, and low beguiled,
Far, far from love and duty.
We've seen the old, the brave and bold,
The young, and gay unthinking,
And men renowned in lore profound,
Become mere fools by drinking.
We've seen the Priest, who should at least
By sober, sound discretion,
And practice, teach, what he should preach,
Exhibit sad digression!
And, though more rare, some ladies fair,
Have slightly been suspected;
And it is due, with truth in view,
To say, they've been—*detected!*—
In fact, we know this *specious* foe,
Spares neither sires nor mothers;
And often flings its sable wings
O'er sisters, friends, and brothers.
And Oh! the shame its darkling flame
Spreads o'er the heart of feeling!
No human art can aid impart,

Nor skill effect its healing!—
Touch not the cup, nor lift it up!
Like serpent's bite it saddens;
Look not on wine, though bright it shine!
Like adder's sting it maddens.—
What dismal gloom surrounds the tomb
Where drunkard low reposes;
While o'er his soul, what sorrows roll,
Nor heaven, nor hell discloses:—
Yet it is said, the *drunkard*, *dead*,
Can not inherit Heaven!
We thus conclude, in solitude
From light and love he's driven.—
But if his fate no tongue can state,
Nor tell his sad condition;
'T were vain to ask, Who claims the task
Of sketching the position
Of *him* who sold for paltry gold,
The drug of dread delusion?
Or, Who portray that fearful day,
Revealing his confusion?
A thicker cloud must darker shroud
His dreary vault of slumber;
While 'round him rise the groans and sighs
Of victims without number.
Then, *he* will know what means that "WOE!"
Pronounced in awful warning;
And then, he'll learn how fierce will burn,
That wrath of bitter scorning!
Each murdered soul his poison bowl
Has hurried to perdition,
Will rend that cloud with shriekings loud,

In vengeful, dread monition !—
But we forbear, nor will we dare
To speculate unknowing ;
Nor can we show what waves of woe
Are madly o'er him flowing !—
Yet while we gaze upon the blaze
Rum selling kindles 'round us,
Let us enquire, Does not this fire
In some degree confound us ?
Have we been staid, and rendered aid
Wherever help was needed ?
Or have we stood in doubtful mood,
The wail of woe unheeded ?—
Ah ! where's the man who calmly can
Assume he has *so* labored,
That he has not by *sign* or *plot*,
This flaming whirlwind favored !

Therefore, Resolved,
That we do now record our vow,
To drink no more, forever,
Of that which blinds our souls and minds,
And holiest ties dissever ;
That while we live we will not give,
Nor to our neighbor proffer ;
Nor will we make, buy, sell, or take,
This human scourge and scoffer.

Resolved,
That we esteem the *License Scheme*,
In all its operations,
Unjust, unwise,—a flimsy guise

For vilest peculations!
The State, 't is true, from favored few
Puts trifles in its coffers,—
Yet who but knows it deepens woes,
And swells the list of paupers?
And hence we learn the sure return
For *pennies* paid for selling,—
Our tax is found in Dollars round,
From *tens*, to HUNDREDS, swelling!—
And, that we view the Licensed crew,
(E'en though our *Solons* doubt it,)
Possessed of will as sure to kill,
As those who sell without it!—
Yet if 'tis well that *few should sell*,
Why then, prevent the *many*?
And, if 'tis *wrong* for all the throng,
What makes it *right* for any?
To *legalize a wrong*, implies
Immoral legislation;
Which should of course, like brutal force,
Receive just execration!
LAWS, well designed, are thus defined
By ablest Commentators:—*
That they be based on virtue chaste,
To act as regulators;
The weak protect—the base reject—
Forbid all wrong and evil,—
In proper light regard the right,
And aid the just and civil.—

---

* *Municipal*, or *Civil*, Law is the Rule of civil conduct, prescribed by the supreme power in a State,—Commanding what is *right*, and Prohibiting what is *wrong*.—*Blackstone, and a host of others.*

Hence we conclude the aptitude
Of this plain definition,
Should put to rest this public pest,
And deep-died imposition!—
No human *might* can make *wrong*, *right*,
Nor screen the vile from terror;
Nor can the State so legislate,
That *truth* should yield to *error!*

Resolved,
As facts have shone kind words alone,
However fitly spoken,
Have failed to wring from tyrant-king,
Redress for spirits broken,
'T is rendered meet, and deemed discreet,
To change our *mode* of *action;*
And neutralize all *party ties*,
To cope with Rum's dread *faction!*—
That therefore we, do now agree,
And pledge ourselves most solemn,
From present hour to blend our power
In firm, unyielding column;
And gather round with zeal profound,
The only safeguard left us;
Nor e'er again be duped by men
Who have of rights bereft us.
We throw the glove in perfect love,
Our arms with Rum to measure;
Resolved to fight for TRUTH and RIGHT,
The Freeman's Shield and Treasure.
And though we meet with sore defeat,—
By numbers oft o'erpowered,

We will not yield the glorious field,
To cohorts, brave—or coward:—
Long as shall rise poor orphans' cries,
Or griefs of mourning mothers—
Or tears shall fall upon the pall
Of lost and murdered brothers,
We will inspire in son and sire,
A flame intense, undying,
Until we view the motley crew,
In grand confusion flying!

Resolved,
We ne'er designed, or e'en opined
That circumstances ever
Should drive our force to take this course,
And ply this potent *lever!*—
And we suppose our wily foes
Will storm and rave, and wonder
Why temp'rance folks should turn their *jokes*,
From *soft appeals*, to *thunder!*—
Yet to their cry we make reply
In calm and sober reason:
For years our men have mostly been
The victims of your treason;
The *temp'rance* man you vaguely scan,
And charge with vile pretences,—
Till by-and-by you raise the cry,
That he's—*non compos mentis!*
He is too mild, too weak, or wild—
Perchance, a sheer *fanatic!*—
And hence your crew receive their cue:
He can't be Democratic!—

And then to think, his common drink
Is nothing but—*cold water!*
How sure the strong rum-drinking throng
Consign him to the slaughter!—
One trait, we own, and *one* alone,
Has signalized your faction;
And that, in turn, *we* too, will learn:
CONSISTENCY OF ACTION!—
Henceforth you'll find a host inclined
From motives, patriotic,
Prepared to meet your clan replete
With armature despotic!

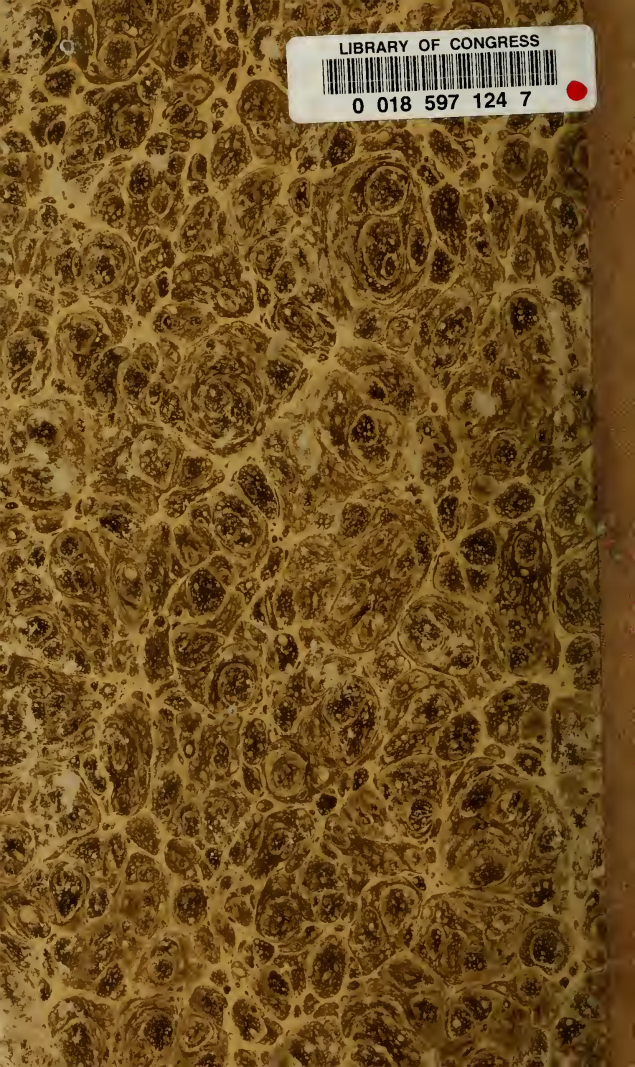
Resolved,
That we disclaim each *party* name,
And banish *party notions*,
And thus commence, in self defence,
To quell Rum's wild commotions;—
And we declare we will not share
With reckless politicians,
Who with a *sum*, or *glass of rum*,
Propose to make conditions!—
We'll urge and plead, and intercede,
Till drunkards shall consider
That they've been slaves to rum and knaves,
And dupes to highest bidder!
Forsworn themselves like silly elves,
To *party* cliques and jugglers,
Whose course of shame may justly claim
The bootless rank of smugglers.

Resolved,
The BALLOT-BOX shall tame the *fox*,
That has so long been prowling;
Our votes shall make Old Alchy quake,
And set his *wolves* all howling!—
We'll not uphold for love nor gold,
Nor yield our approbation
To friend or foe, who will not go
To free the State and Nation,
From reckless reign of Rum's domain,
With all its requisition;—
We thus define our whole design,
Our purpose, and position.—
Yet let no man mistake our plan,
Nor deem us rash cecederS:
Our only aim, is to reclaim
Each party, and its leaders!—
We've girded tight our armor bright,
And look to God for favor;
Our cause is just,—and therefore trust
He'll smile upon our labor.

Resolved,
That though we wave our banners brave,
And thus declare our *wishes*,
We're not intent, nor madly bent
Upon the *loaves* and *fishes!*
Yet 'tis our aim, we boldly claim,
To purge the Legislature,
Till gin and rum, and party scum
Of every name and nature,
In perfect rout are driven out,

To seek their proper level,—
And with their *kin*, of shame and sin,
In his dark realm to revel!

Resolved,
That we will hold with purpose bold
To this plain Declaration,
Until each great and growing State
Shall shout—EMANCIPATION!—
And we appeal to ALL who feel
To favor this communion,
With heart and hand to join our band,
To save the State, and Union!—
With this in view, we will pursue
All just and lawful measures,—
And to this end, we'll freely lend
Our TALENTS, TIME, and TREASURES.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